

The University of Chicago

I. WALT WHITMAN AND *THE ATLANTIC*
MONTHLY

II. WALT WHITMAN'S RELATIONS WITH
SOME NEW YORK MAGAZINES

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1933

By
PORTIA BAKER

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WALT WHITMAN AND THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

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I

IN THE literary world into which *Leaves of Grass* was born, Boston, and in time *The Atlantic Monthly*, uttered the last critical word. It is true that by 1874 *The Literary World*, a Boston critical review, was admitting the transfer of literary supremacy from Boston to New York;¹ but though as time went on the Boston periodicals had to share their position as arbiters of literature with other magazines, *The Atlantic Monthly* was not superseded. In 1870 *The Nation* declared: "All Americans—Illinoisans, Californians, dwellers in the isles of the sea—have great faith in Boston's critical ability; and perhaps even a larger faith than in her productive powers."² To the end of his life Whitman never lost his sensitiveness to Brahmin opinion. He had much to say about "the New York literary crowd" also, but the attitude of cultured New Englanders, "the scholar class," probably caused him even greater concern.³

A rapid survey of the facts of Whitman's life shows that Boston played a part in some of the most significant events and circumstances. Charles Eliot Norton and Edward Everett Hale, Brahmins both, wrote the most favorable reviews of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*.⁴ The review by Hale was published in no less important an organ of Brahmin opinion than *The North American Review*.⁵ It was a Boston house, that of Thayer and Eldridge, which brought out *Leaves of Grass* in 1860 and gave it for the first time a kind of

¹ In an editorial, "Intellectual Intolerance," IV, 152 (March, 1874).

² X, 255 (April 21, 1870).

³ See Horace L. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1906; N. Y., 1908, 1914), *passim*.

⁴ For attribution to Norton of the review of *Leaves of Grass* in *Putnam's Monthly* for Sept., 1855, see *A Leaf of Grass from Shady Hill*, with an Explanatory Essay by Kenneth B. Murdock (Harvard University Press, 1928).

⁵ LXXXII, 272-275 (Jan., 1856).

regularity in the book trade. It was a Boston house, that of Osgood and Company, which again undertook the publication of *Leaves of Grass* twenty-one years later. At the invitation of the St. Botolph's Club of Boston, for which George Parsons Lathrop acted as emissary, Whitman journeyed to Boston in the spring of 1881 to deliver his Lincoln lecture.⁶ According to an account of this occasion in *The Literary World*,⁷ he was well received and Howells acted as a sort of master of ceremonies. Writing in *The Critic* (New York) on May 7, 1881, of his late visit to Boston, Whitman acknowledged courtesies received from many literary men, including John T. Trowbridge, James T. Fields, F. B. Sanborn, Howells, and Aldrich.⁸ On the visit to Boston in 1860 also, and on the visit later in 1881 while *Leaves of Grass* was going through the press, he met many persons of literary importance.⁹ In Boston an abortive Walt Whitman Society had its inception in 1887. And in Boston was collected in the same year the Cottage Fund which perhaps went ultimately to the erection of the tomb in Harleigh Cemetery. Boston literati figured conspicuously in the later years of Whitman's life on subscription lists, in letters of congratulation on important occasions, and in the guest lists of such functions as the Lincoln lecture in New York in 1887 and the birthday dinner in Camden in 1889.¹⁰ In the eighties such diverse figures as Sadakichi Hartmann, William Sloane Kennedy, Hamlin Garland, Louise Chandler Moulton, and Harriet Prescott Spofford, all residing in Boston, expressed publicly their approval of Whitman.

Because, then, of the literary standing of Boston and its chief

⁶ William Sloane Kennedy, *Reminiscences of Walt Whitman* (London, 1896), pp. 3-4. Sylvester Baxter in "Walt Whitman in Boston," *The New England Magazine*, XII, 714-721 (Aug., 1892), credits the invitation to the Bohemian Papyrus Club, of which the most prominent member was John Boyle O'Reilly.

⁷ XII, 153 (April 23, 1881).

⁸ Whitman's Boston visits and his generally favorable attitude toward the city are treated by Clifton J. Furness in "Walt Whitman Looks at Boston," *The New England Quarterly*, I, 353-370 (July, 1928).

⁹ Among the persons whom Whitman met for the first time in Boston in 1860 were John T. Trowbridge, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and William Douglas O'Connor. Baxter in "Walt Whitman in Boston," *op. cit.*, mentions as guests at a party which Whitman attended in Trueman H. Bartlett's studio in Aug., 1881, John Boyle O'Reilly, Joaquin Miller, Francis H. Underwood, Arlo Bates, Frank Hill Smith, and Frederic H. Guernsey.

¹⁰ The list of prominent persons at the Lincoln lecture in 1887 is given in *The Critic*, n. s., VII, 206-207 (April 23, 1887). For the birthday celebration in 1889, see Horace Traubel, *Camden's Compliment to Walt Whitman . . .* (Philadelphia, 1889).

organ of literary opinion, *The Atlantic Monthly*, because of Whitman's important, though infrequent, contacts with Brahmins and Brahmin culture, and because of his apparent desire for sanction in these high quarters, the treatment which he received during his lifetime from *The Atlantic* is a matter of some critical importance.

II

Concerning the attitude of *The Atlantic Monthly* toward Whitman a biographer of Sarah Orne Jewett writes: "Walt Whitman had contributed two poems in its [*The Atlantic's*] opening decade, but you look in vain for any mention of him during Howells's editorship, while Aldrich thought him little better than a charlatan."¹¹ Whitman's own impression of the treatment he had received is indicated in a conversation of 1888:

Some one asked W. why he was not received in The Atlantic? "How should I know? They will have none of me. I have met Aldrich—used to in New York, at the beershop—indeed, have met Howells often enough. They are friendly in all personal ways, of course. But when I was in Boston, although Aldrich called on me—and O'Reilly, who is my ardent friend . . . went several times to see him and induce him to invite me to contribute to the magazine—he made no tenders of literary hospitality: he was dead still and let me go." Had he ever tried them with verses? "Yes, years ago, with *Elemental Drifts*, for instance, which they published—and some others, I believe. Don't think I blame 'em—feel anyway hard about all this: it all belongs to the story—I always take what comes: kicks, blessings, anything. No man of that stripe could accept me on the whole—could say 'yes' without a touch of 'no.'"¹²

Later in the same year Whitman unearthed for Traubel's use some rejection slips,¹³ among which was one from *The Atlantic* which may be taken as support for a theory of hostility on the part of the magazine, though Emory Holloway does not regard it so¹⁴ and though it is easy enough to find records of rejections sent to persons whose literary status was much more secure than Whitman's could have been.

A study of the history of *The Atlantic Monthly* would not perhaps be encouraging to a person looking for influences favorable to

¹¹ Francis Otto Matthiessen, *Sarah Orne Jewett* (Boston and New York, 1929), p. 62.

¹² *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 169-170.

¹³ *Ibid.*, II, 213.

¹⁴ *Whitman* (New York, 1926), p. 189.

Whitman. The aim of the *Atlantic* projectors was interpreted forty years after its founding as follows:

It was not as a mere publishing enterprise, but as an institution, that they regarded it. . . . Holding fast to the faith of its founders, that Literature is one of the most serious concerns of men, and that the highest service to our national life is the encouragement and the production of Literature, the *Atlantic* has never had owner or editor who was tempted to change its steadfast course by reason of any changing fashion.¹⁵

The editors who accepted the burden of this lofty aim were, in turn, James Russell Lowell, with Francis H. Underwood as assistant (1857 to 1861); James T. Fields (1861 to 1871), with William Dean Howells as assistant from 1866 on; William Dean Howells (1871 to 1881), with George Parsons Lathrop as assistant in 1877; Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1881 to 1890); and Horace E. Scudder (1890 to 1898). Of these men, Howells and Aldrich were the ones who would necessarily have influenced most the fortunes of Whitman in the magazine. As assistant editor, Howells seems to have been the power behind the throne. "He [Fields] had left the reading of manuscripts to me," wrote Howells in 1907, "and almost always approved my choice in them, only reserving to himself the supreme right of accepting things I had not seen, and of inviting contributions."¹⁶ As assistant editor Howells wrote nearly all the literary notices. In commenting on his editorial labors, he said:

When I began to share the work of writing literary notices with others, and at last to leave it almost wholly to them, they and I wrote so very much alike that I could not always be sure which notices I had done. . . . I had the help of the best young critics whom I knew, and who abounded in Boston and Cambridge. . . .¹⁷

Aldrich, according to a statement quoted by his biographer, was a little less accessible than Howells to new and unknown talent.¹⁸ He read all the poetry submitted, and the severity of his discrimination is indicated by a statement in a letter to Edmund Clarence Stedman in 1881:

¹⁵ "Forty Years of the *Atlantic Monthly*," *The Atlantic Monthly*, LXXX, 572 (Oct., 1897). By Scudder? He was editor at this time.

¹⁶ "Recollections of an Atlantic Editorship," *The Atlantic Monthly*, C, 594 (Nov., 1907).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 596.

¹⁸ Ferris Greenslet, *The Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich* (Boston and New York, 1908), p. 146.

You are the only one of our day and generation who is doing anything at present. In your letter you speak of having written two poems. I wish you'd send them to me. I am slowly making up my mind to publish none but incontestably fine poems in the 'Atlantic'—which means only about four poems per year.¹⁹

Aldrich's "compact and capable coterie of critical reviewers"²⁰ consisted of Richard Grant White, George Edward Woodberry,²¹ George Parsons Lathrop, Horace E. Scudder, and Harriet Waters Preston.

Since these editors and critics were in a position to determine whether Whitman's work should be accepted for publication and what recognition the poet should receive in the *Atlantic* critical columns, it is worth while to determine whether, in the language of William Sloane Kennedy, they were "whole-hearted accepters" or "bitter and relentless foes and vilifiers."²²

The attitude of the first editor of *The Atlantic* toward Whitman was one of aversion. While in Europe in 1855, Lowell had received from Charles Eliot Norton a copy of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, together with a letter expressing some admiration. His reply indicated a complete distaste for the book, even though it was unread:

... Whitman—I remember him of old ... No, no, the kind of thing you describe won't do. When a man aims at originality he acknowledges himself consciously unoriginal, a want of self-respect which does not often go along with the capacity for great things. The great fellows have always let the stream of their activity flow quietly—if one splashes in it he may make a sparkle, but he muddies it too, and the good folk down below (I mean posterity) will have none of it.²³

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²¹ White and Woodberry had no enthusiasm for Whitman. The principal utterance of the former which I have found is a parody of Whitman put into the mouth of a boisterous American in his *The Fate of Mansfield Humphreys* and quoted in *The Literary World*, XV, 212-213 (June 28, 1884). On June 18, 1881, *The Critic* reproached Woodberry for disregarding Whitman in an article on American literature in *The Fortnightly Review* (*The Critic*, I, 164). The criticisms in his *America in Literature* (New York, 1903), pp. 240-243, show a low estimate of Whitman.

²² By these terms Kennedy in *The Fight of a Book for the World* (West Yarmouth, Mass., 1926) designates the men who were in general favorable to Whitman and those who were in general unfavorable.

²³ Letter of Oct. 12, 1855, in *Letters of James Russell Lowell*, ed. C. E. Norton (New York, 1894), I, 242-243.

An even more intolerant comment appears in a letter from Lowell on December 7, 1863, to the Reverend W. L. Gage, who had protested, apparently, against the presence of *Leaves of Grass* in the Harvard Library. "It [*Leaves of Grass*] is a book I never looked into farther than to satisfy myself that it was a solemn humbug," Lowell wrote.²⁴ And he concluded the letter: "I am obliged to you, however, for calling my attention to a part of this book of which I knew nothing, and I will take care to keep it out of the way of students."²⁵

That Lowell's opinion probably did not change in later years is indicated by a report of Robert Underwood Johnson of a visit to Lowell with Richard Watson Gilder:

After some desultory conversation, mention having been made of Whitman's "poetry," Lowell broke out, "It isn't poetry at all," and in his *ex cathedra* way he went on to discuss it with Gilder. When they had come to a pause, I ventured to suggest whether the body of Whitman's writing was not something between prose and poetry, whereupon Lowell turned upon me almost fiercely and exclaimed, "There isn't anything between prose and poetry."²⁶

Lowell was present at Whitman's Lincoln lecture in New York in 1887, for John Burroughs mentioned sitting in a box with him and Charles Eliot Norton.²⁷ About this time *The Critic* wrote of him as an admirer of Whitman,²⁸ but there seems to be no corroboration of this statement. Certainly Whitman himself believed that Lowell's attitude toward him was uniformly hostile. "I have always been told by the New England fellows close to Lowell," he said in 1888, "that his feeling towards me is one of radical aversion."²⁹

The second editor of *The Atlantic*, James T. Fields, seems not to have expressed a critical opinion of Whitman, unless the rejection

²⁴ *New Letters of James Russell Lowell*, ed. M. A. DeWolfe Howe (New York, 1932), p. 115.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²⁶ R. U. Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays* (Boston, 1923), p. 329. The date of the visit is not given. It was some time after Johnson's arrival in New York in 1873.

²⁷ *The Heart of Burroughs's Journals*, ed. Clara Barrus (Boston and New York, 1928), p. 140.

²⁸ *The Critic*, n. s., VIII, 43 (July 23, 1887).

²⁹ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 447. See also J. T. Trowbridge, "Reminiscences of Walt Whitman," *The Atlantic Monthly*, LXXXIX, 172 (Feb., 1902); Clara Barrus, *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades* (Boston and New York, 1931), p. 142 n.; and Annie Fields, *Authors and Friends* (Boston and New York, 1896), p. 133.

slip previously referred to,³⁰ which was signed simply 'The Editors of *The Atlantic Monthly*,' is indicative.³¹ His influential assistant, Howells, later editor, seems to have had at the time of his connection with *The Atlantic* a very limited appreciation of Whitman. In 1866 John Burroughs distrusted Howells's attitude toward him friend. He wrote to Myron Benton on March 20:

Some time ago a letter from the Atlantic, in answer to one of mine, in which they stated they were quite ready to *see* an article on W. W., though their editors were not prepared to champion him in so unqualified a manner as Mr. Emerson had, led me to prepare an article on 'Drum Taps.' Hearing that Howells was going there on the editorial staff, I hurried it off, but not in time—'Willie, dear' was there ahead of me, and of course it was not accepted.³²

Burroughs's contempt for Howells was probably occasioned by the latter's review of *Drum-Taps*, which had appeared in *The Round Table* on November 11 of the previous year. As a matter of fact, this review, though it condemned Whitman's formlessness, granted him "rich possibilities"; but private correspondence shows that Burroughs was not far wrong in his estimate of Howells's attitude. Howells wrote to Stedman from the *Atlantic* office on December 5, 1866, as follows:

The small but enthusiastic admirers of Walt Whitman could not make him a poet, if they wrote all the newspapers and magazines in the world full about him. He is poetical as the other elements are, and just as satisfactory to read as earth, water, air and fire. I am tired, I confess, of the whole Whitman business.³³

Later utterances of Howells, as conductor of *Harper's* "Editor's Study" in the 1880's, though not enthusiastic, contained some judicious praise. His comments in *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*³⁴ preserve the attitude of tempered appreciation.

³⁰ The poems rejected ("1861" and two others, not named) had been submitted under Lowell's editorship. They are mentioned by Lowell in a letter to Fields of Oct. 8, 1861 (*New Letters of James Russell Lowell*, pp. 101-102).

³¹ Fields showed Whitman some personal kindness. See letter to Burroughs (Dec. 22, 1879) in regard to a Christmas remembrance of one hundred dollars to the "noble old veteran" (Barrus, *op. cit.*, p. 189).

³² Clara Barrus, "Whitman and Burroughs as Comrades," *Yale Review*, n. s., XV, 68 (Oct., 1925).

³³ *Life in Letters of William Dean Howells*, ed. Mildred Howells (New York, 1928), I, 116.

³⁴ (New York, 1901), pp. 73-76.

But what of Aldrich, who read all the poetry submitted during his reign and no doubt kept a watchful eye on the "coterie of capable critics"? From 1858 to 1860 he had been, with Fitz-James O'Brien and William Winter, an assistant editor of *The Saturday Press*, with which Whitman had an important literary connection in the late 1850's, and his biographer states that there are records of several meetings with Whitman;³⁵ but his attitude was either very different from that of his chief, Henry Clapp, or underwent a very great change later. Two letters to Stedman after the appearance of the latter's important paper on Whitman in *Scribner's Monthly* for November, 1880,³⁶ reveal a degree of aversion which gave little promise that Walt Whitman might enjoy the hospitality of *The Atlantic* while Aldrich was its director. In the first of these he writes:

If Whitman had been able (he was not able, for he tried it and failed) to put his thought into artistic verse, he would have attracted little or no attention, perhaps. Where he is fine, he is fine in precisely the way of conventional poets. The greater bulk of his writing is neither prose nor verse, and certainly it is not an improvement on either. A glorious line now and then, and a striking bit of color here and there, do not constitute a poet—especially a poet for the *People*. There never was a poet so calculated to please a very few. As you say, he will probably be hereafter exhumed and anatomized by learned surgeons—who prefer a subject with thin shoulder-blades or some abnormal organ to a well-regulated corpse. But he will never be regarded in the same light as Villon . . . Whitman's manner is a hollow affectation, and represents neither the man nor the time. As the voice of the 19th century, he will have little significance in the 21st. That he will outlast the majority of his contemporaries, I haven't the faintest doubt—but it will be in a glass case or a quart of spirits in an anatomical museum.³⁷

Horace E. Scudder, last editor of *The Atlantic* in Whitman's lifetime, as early as 1866 had sent *Drum-Taps* to William Michael Rossetti, saying that no one had caught so perfectly as Whitman "the most elusive elements of American civilization."³⁸ In 1887, in a review of Herbert Gilchrist's biography of his mother, Anne

³⁵ Greenslet, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

³⁶ XXI, 47-64.

³⁷ Letter of Nov. 20, 1880 (Greenslet, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139). See, for a second letter in a similar vein, *ibid.*, p. 140.

³⁸ Quoted by Bliss Perry in *Walt Whitman* (Boston, 1906), p. 184, from the *Rossetti Papers* (London, 1902).

Gilchrist, he expressed a not unsympathetic attitude toward Whitman,³⁹ and his paper in *The Atlantic* on the occasion of the poet's death,⁴⁰ though it seemed to a disciple "cold-blooded and ineffectual,"⁴¹ was more thoughtful and more appreciative than articles on Whitman by important literary men commonly were. Since his opinion was not altogether a mean one, it is interesting to note that Scudder was one of the "compact and capable coterie of critical reviewers" previously referred to. Another of the company, George Parsons Lathrop, who was in 1877 assistant to Howells in editing *The Atlantic*, felt genuine enthusiasm for Whitman, though by his own confession he was timid of expressing his admiration. He wrote to John Burroughs from Cambridge on May 19, 1877, as follows:

There are two persons hereabouts who appreciate Whitman, whom I know. Doubtless there are many more who are unknown to me. But I can believe that the scoffing narrowness which meets any avowal of their appreciation has driven them, as it has me, to preserve silence.

It is a great pity his works are not really published, and I have been wondering, long, how to get them. I have nothing but Rossetti's edition. Is there no way of obtaining them? I should be very glad if you would inform me as to this.⁴²

It is evident from other letters of Lathrop to Burroughs⁴³ and from Edward Carpenter's account of meeting him in Boston in 1877⁴⁴ that the literary atmosphere of that city was uncongenial to him. In October, 1877, he wrote Burroughs that he had left *The Atlantic*.⁴⁵ It was unfortunate for Whitman that his influence was removed.⁴⁶

III

Turning to the files of the magazine, one finds at least as much comment on Whitman and as favorable comment as this survey of

³⁹ *The Atlantic Monthly*, LX, 275-281 (Aug., 1887).

⁴⁰ LXIX, 831-835 (June, 1892). This article is unsigned, but it seems probable that it was written by Scudder, who was at that time editor.

⁴¹ Kennedy, *The Fight of a Book for the World*, p. 78.

⁴² *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 17.

⁴³ See *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades*, pp. 144, 169.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴⁶ In 1878 Lathrop wrote to Whitman requesting poems for an anthology, qualifying his request, however, by stating that he must have something "to conform to the more usual rhythms at least as far as *Captain, My Captain!*" (*With Walt Whitman in Camden*, II, 315-316). See also Lathrop's very favorable comment on Whitman in "The Literary Movement in New York," *Harper's*, LXXIII, 823-824 (Nov., 1886).

persons would lead one to expect. In April, 1860, there appeared in the magazine "Bardic Symbols," unsigned, as was the rule for contributions at that period. But the authorship was apparently no secret, since Henry Clapp wrote to Whitman on March 27, 1860: The papers all over the land have noticed your poem in the Atlantic and have generally pitched into it strong; which I take to be good for you and your new publishers, who if they move rapidly and concentrate their forces will make a Napoleonic thing of it.⁴⁷

This triumph was achieved during the editorship of Lowell, as a result, one surmises, of the fact that the third edition of *Leaves of Grass* was being brought out by a respected Boston house. It is doubtful whether the *Atlantic* editors enjoyed the press comments which delighted Henry Clapp. At any rate, when Whitman attempted to become a contributor again the following year, he was refused.⁴⁸ But in February, 1869, his "Proud Music of the Sea-Storm" appeared. This poem was sent through Emerson, who gave it to Fields at Whitman's request; and Whitman received one hundred dollars for it.⁴⁹ Thereafter, nothing written by Whitman appeared in the magazine until April, 1904, when "An American Primer" was printed in its pages. It is worthy of note in this connection that in the eighties Whitman had contributed both prose and poetry to *The North American Review* (which had been transferred from Boston to New York and was edited by Allen Thorndike Rice), *The Critic* (New York), *The Century Magazine*, formerly *Scribner's Monthly* (New York), *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (New York), and *Lippincott's* (Philadelphia).

Of the nine editions of *Leaves of Grass* which appeared during Whitman's lifetime, there is in *The Atlantic Monthly* only one genuine review, that of the Osgood edition of 1881, to which four and a half columns were devoted in the issue of January, 1882.⁵⁰ A notice of *After All Not to Create Only* in January, 1872, had dismissed the poem as "one of his curious catalogues of the American emotions, inventions, and geographical subdivisions."⁵¹ As late as

⁴⁷ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 237.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 213.

⁴⁹ See correspondence with Emerson and Fields, *ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁰ XLIX, 119-126.

⁵¹ XXIX, 108-109. The same issue of the magazine contains a review two and a third columns long of *East and West Poems* by Bret Harte.

1877, indeed, there was perhaps some doubt of the propriety of an editorial discussion of Whitman from a favorable point of view, although in December of that year a long comment, inspired by the prolonged controversy which was conducted in 1876 in the British press, appeared in the "Contributors' Club."⁵²

The *Atlantic* Whitman record from 1860 to 1877 gives support to the poet's statement that in the early days respectable critics generally ignored him.⁵³ In July, 1860, *Leaves of Grass* was listed among the recent publications, but there was no review. There was no review of *Drum-Taps* (1865). In January, 1870, Thomas Wentworth Higginson in an article on Americanism in literature⁵⁴ did not mention Whitman, though the gist of his complaint of the native literature was its mildness, a fault which Whitman would seem to have overcome. By 1877, however, it had become difficult to ignore Whitman. Besides the article in the "Contributors' Club" in that year, there was a sympathetic comment on John Burroughs's admiration for the poet in a review of his *Birds and Poets*.⁵⁵ Whitman's name appeared twice in 1878 in discussions of the distinction between verse and prose.⁵⁶ In January, 1886, he was mentioned, though not in complimentary terms, in a review of Stedman's *Poets of America*.⁵⁷ In August, 1887, five columns of a long review of Herbert Gilchrist's biography of his mother, written by Horace E. Scudder, were devoted to her relations with Whitman. In July, 1890, appeared a brief notice of Elizabeth Porter Gould's *Gems from Walt Whitman*.⁵⁸ In September, 1890, Holmes gave in "Over

⁵² This article was perhaps written by Lathrop.

⁵³ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 127.

⁵⁴ *The Atlantic Monthly*, XXV, 56-63. Higginson had a strong aversion to Whitman. By his own confession he had read *Leaves of Grass* on a sea voyage and it was associated for him with seasickness (*Cheerful Yesterdays*, Boston and New York, 1898, pp. 230-231). Moreover, he could never forgive Whitman for not having joined the army. On Feb. 4, 1882, he published in his *Woman's Journal* (Boston) an editorial called "Unmanly Manhood" (the principal subject of which was Oscar Wilde), in which he made a thrust at Whitman, whose *Drum-Taps* sounded to him "as hollow as the instruments they counterfeit." His personal distaste, as well as disapproval of the poet's grossness and lack of form, was expressed again in an article for *The Nation* of April 7, 1892, reprinted in his *Contemporaries* (Boston and New York, 1900). An article on Lanier, first published in *The Chautauquan* in April, 1887, and reprinted in *Contemporaries*, gave him another chance for denunciation. In the later *Part of a Man's Life* (Boston and New York, 1905) there is some praise.

⁵⁵ XXX, 113-114 (July, 1877).

⁵⁶ XLI, 391 (March, 1878); XLII, 368 (Sept., 1878).

⁵⁷ LVII, 128-133.

⁵⁸ LXVI, 143. The comment criticized the book, but not Whitman, unfavorably.

the Teacups" a long comment on Whitman. In June, 1892, following Whitman's death on March 26, there were two long articles on the poet.

There is much in this record that is suggestive. If the acceptance of the two poems in 1860 and 1869 be attributed to the influence of Whitman's friends, and if one suppose that the editors were influenced in the choice of material for the magazine not only by personal taste but by a knowledge of the taste of the *Atlantic* clientèle, one may judge that Whitman never became sufficiently established in his lifetime to be acceptable to this conservative, select, but fairly large group—large, that is, as the magazine public existed in the nineteenth century, before the advent of the popular monthly.⁵⁹ It is notable that, though Howells might have been expected to be liberal in his judgment, the only extensive comment on Whitman during his editorship was under the label of "Contributor," and was probably not written by Howells;⁶⁰ and it is even more significant that Whitman's critical advent to the pages of *The Atlantic* came apparently as a result of British favor. The discussions of Whitman in the American magazines and newspapers in 1876 were numerous, and often acrid. Though American critics might resent English intervention in the personal affairs of native poets⁶¹ and commonly disagreed with the English estimate of Whitman's work, attributing this estimate to English *ennui* and desire for New World novelty and for a literature as picturesque as the foreigner's dream of the American frontier, nevertheless the most respectable of them could no longer disregard Whitman, but had to take up the pen for self-justification, if for no more disinterested motive. Whatever the motive of the *Atlantic* "Contributor" in 1877, it was considered by literary people a matter of some importance that Whitman should have won this recognition, as is suggested by a letter to him

⁵⁹ There were 30,000 subscribers when *The Atlantic* was transferred to Ticknor and Fields in 1859.

⁶⁰ A letter of Stedman to Howells on May 8, 1880, implies that Howells had asserted that Whitman had not tried to have anything published in *The Atlantic* during his editorship, and shows clearly that Howells had offered to publish in *The Atlantic* Stedman's paper on Whitman which appeared in *Scribner's Monthly* in Nov., 1880. (See Laura Stedman and George M. Gould, *Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman* (New York, 1910, II, 106).

⁶¹ See Gilder's comment on the subscriptions raised in England, referred to by Whitman in *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 170 and 291.

from John T. Trowbridge, who knew his Boston and could set right value on its influence.⁶² The soreness left by the British appreciation of Whitman, acute in 1876, lingered on. It found expression in 1887 in the discussion of Walt Whitman and Anne Gilchrist. Commenting on "a disposition among literary and artistic people of a distinct type to construct an American phantom," Scudder wrote:

With the ardor of worshippers, the more *outré* their idol the more they admired it. An exaggerated type of frontier lawlessness, some sombrero-shadowed, cowhide-booted being, filled them with special ecstasy. . . . They did not ask for form,—they had abundance of that in England; they asked for spirit, and it might take any shape it chose. So, persons whose artistic perception was delicately developed accepted as a fact, which transcended all ordinary laws of art, poetry as huge, as floundering, as inorganic, as Blake's wandering visions, and like those visions shot through with superb lines, touched with gleams of heavenly beauty, suggesting waves of profound thought. Poetry broken loose was what they saw and admired. . . . Americans are accustomed to tall talk, and they treat it good-humoredly, as a weakness of their own. But because they are living freely, generously, and if one may say so, splurgily, they instinctively seek form in their ideals of art, and demand that the spiritual forces which they admire shall have a completeness and precision complementary to their own somewhat vague and unrestrained life. . . . It was this perfection of form which endeared Longfellow to his countrymen, and it is the delicacy of art in Hawthorne which has made him so representative an American writer.⁶³

Here *Atlantic* (that is, Bostonian) standards are maintained and British aberrations explained away.

It is further significant, perhaps, that the long review of the 1881 (Osgood) edition of *Leaves of Grass* appeared during the editorship of Aldrich, who, as has been shown, had slight regard for Whitman. Few magazines failed to notice that edition, bearing the imprint of a Boston house, and during the remaining ten years of his life Whitman could be sure of wide critical attention to any publication.⁶⁴ With characteristic objection to being stampeded,

⁶² *Ibid.*, II, 225.

⁶³ LX, 278-279 (Aug., 1887).

⁶⁴ Critical attention to Whitman in the principal American periodicals increased noticeably in the eighties. The following figures are from a survey I have made of the principal American magazines, monthly and weekly, in search of contributions by Whitman, reviews and notices of his books, and incidental comments on him: 1870, 6 items; 1871, 8;

however, *The Atlantic* ignored *Specimen Days and Collect* in 1882, *November Boughs* in 1888, and *Good-Bye my Fancy* in 1891. Further indication that to the end Whitman stood in a doubtful critical position with *The Atlantic* is given by the discussions of his life and work which appeared in the magazine shortly after his death. Lowell and Whittier, both of whom died within a year of Whitman, were the subjects of long signed articles, comprehensive in discussion of the writer's work and eulogistic in tone; in *The Atlantic* for June, 1892, were "An Impression of Walt Whitman," unsigned, in the "Contributors' Club" and an article, also unsigned, presumably by the editor, Horace Scudder.⁶⁵ Scudder's article gave some mild praise, commended "O Captain, my Captain!" as the greatest of the poet's works because "it obeys the higher law of self-forgetfulness," whereas the poet was usually self-centered, and ended with this forecast of his future fame:

There is unquestionably, for many natures, a tonic in Whitman's verse, his work tells for largeness, for freedom, for the recollection of elemental forces in man and nature; but that it has in it the quality of universality which is the final test of a poet who sets up such claims as he we deny emphatically. A few verses will be everybody's; a few persons will want everything; but for the most part the work is a quarry from which one here and one there will bring away stones precious to him and for his use. There is a law of life for great poetry, and Whitman was not obedient to it; though one may call him a Titan, he will meet the fate of Titans.⁶⁶

The reference here to the "higher law" suggests an ethical and moral basis of such disapproval of Whitman as *The Atlantic* expressed. The comment in the "Contributors' Club" for December, 1877, mentions as the three common indictments against him, that he is nasty, that he is tedious and prosaic, and that he has a barbaric yawp. The writer continues: "The first is true only of those unfortunate Leaves, which yet contain some fine lines; for in his subsequent writings it would not be easy to find a single gross passage."⁶⁷ But when the edition of 1881 appeared, every one was

⁶⁵ It is notable that *Harper's* and *The Century* had no articles at the time of Whitman's death.

⁶⁶ LXIX, 835.

⁶⁷ XL, 749.

forced to observe that Whitman remained unregenerate. The *Atlantic* reviewer takes a judicious tone:

The only profitable point of view from which *Leaves of Grass* can be regarded is one that, while giving distinctness to the serious error of unclean exposure and to the frequent feebleness of form and style which reduce large portions of the work to tedious and helpless prose, leaves our vision clear for the occasional glimpses of beauty that the book discloses.⁶⁸

He goes on to mention felicities as well as absurdities of phrasing, and commends "Pioneers! O Pioneers," "To the Man-of-War-Bird," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd." He considers "To a Locomotive in Winter" the finest embodiment of the grandeur of applied mechanics which American poetry has produced, and thinks that the sentiments of democracy, the manliness, and the hope for humanity in Whitman's work should be valued; but he saves two columns for his discussion of the "fleshliness" of the book and concludes severely:

Fortunately, however, the chief damage done will be to the author himself, who thus dishonors his own physical nature; for imperfect though the race is, it still remains so much purer than the stained and distorted reflection of its animalism in *Leaves of Grass*, that the book cannot attain to any very wide influence.⁶⁹

It was no moral question, however, which engaged Holmes's attention in September, 1890, in his comment on Whitman in "Over the Teacups," and surely no one could express more authoritatively Brahmin judgment. Apparently he found Whitman somewhat vulgar. He coupled his name with that of Timothy Dexter, a comic, illiterate person with delusions of grandeur who likewise declared "literary independence." And he ended his remarks with some condescension:

I confess that I am not in sympathy with some of the movements that accompany the manifestations of American social and literary independence. . . . I prefer to speak of a fellow-citizen already venerable by his years, entitled to respect by useful services to his country, and recognized by many as the prophet of a new poetical dispensation, with the customary title of adults rather than by the free and easy school-boy

⁶⁸ XLIX, 124 (Jan., 1882).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

abbreviation with which he introduced himself many years ago to the public. As for his rhapsodies, Number Seven, our "Cracked Teacup," says they sound to him like "fugues played upon a big organ which has been struck by lightning." So far as concerns literary independence, if we understand by that term the getting rid of our subjection to British criticism, such as it was in the days when the question was asked, "Who reads an American book?" we may consider it pretty well established. If it means dispensing with punctuation, coining words at will, self-revelation unrestrained by a sense of what is decorous, declamations in which everything is glorified without being idealized, "poetry" in which the reader must make the rhythms which the poet has not made for him, then I think we had better continue literary colonists. I shrink from a lawless independence to which all the virile energy and trampling audacity of Mr. Whitman fail to reconcile me. But there is room for everybody and everything in our huge hemisphere. Young America is like a three-year-old colt with his saddle and bridle just taken off. The first thing he wants to do is to *roll*. He is a droll object, sprawling in the grass with his four hoofs in the air; but he likes it, and it won't harm us. So let him roll,—let him roll!⁷⁰

IV

If *The Atlantic* was cool and reluctant, it was courteous. Brahmin distaste for the rude controversy of the marketplace is shown in the review of the 1881 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Even the coolness of *The Atlantic* must be considered in the light of its coolness to most persons who were not of New England. Edmund Clarence Stedman complained to Bayard Taylor in the 1860's of the inhospitality of *The Atlantic* to New York writers. Howells asserted: "The literary theories we accepted were New England theories, the criticism we valued was New England criticism, or, more strictly speaking, Boston theories, Boston criticism."⁷¹

The names which appeared in early numbers of *The Atlantic* were such as to inspire awe: Motley, Longfellow, Emerson, Norton,

⁷⁰ LXVI, 389-390. Holmes was sometimes less tolerant than he appears here. In a letter of June 7, 1877, Edward Carpenter wrote to Burroughs from Boston that Holmes had "whinnied" at mention of Whitman's name (Barrus, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-142). On Sept. 7, 1885, Holmes wrote to Whittier, "As to Walt Whitman, some of his poems are among the most cynical instances of indecent exposure I recollect, outside of what is sold as obscene literature" (*Whittier Correspondence*, ed. John Albree, Salem, Mass., 1911, p. 241). Annie Fields quotes Holmes as saying that Whitman was "in an amorphous condition" (*Authors and Friends*, p. 133).

⁷¹ *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*, p. 115.

Holmes, Whittier, Mrs. Stowe, Lowell, and Parke Godwin. Few could hope to be of this group. Longfellow contributed seventy-two poems between 1857 and 1883.⁷² Whittier's contributions were probably almost as heavy. Thomas Bailey Aldrich was the type of person considered a worthy successor to the elder poets. His biographer writes:

The "Atlantic Monthly" was ready to take as much copy as he could send, and between 1875 and 1880 he printed in its pages twenty-three poems, "The Queen of Sheba," "The Stillwater Tragedy" and most of the sketches that carry the reader "From Ponkapog to Pesth,"—or very nearly one half of his entire collected work in prose.⁷³

Writing of the temper of *The Atlantic Monthly* when he took over his duties on it in 1866, Howells stated:

The *Atlantic Monthly*, which was distinctively literary, was distinctively a New England magazine, though from the first it had been characterized by what was more national, what was more universal, in the New England temperament. Its chief contributors for nearly twenty years were Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Emerson, Doctor Hale, Colonel Higginson, Mrs. Stowe, Whipple, Rose Terry Cooke, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mrs. Prescott Spofford, Mrs. Phelps Ward, and other New England writers who still lived in New England, and largely in the region of Boston. Occasionally there came a poem from Bryant, at New York, from Mr. Stedman, from Mr. Stoddard and Mrs. Stoddard, from Mr. Aldrich, and from Bayard Taylor. But all these, except the last, were not only of New England race, but of New England birth.⁷⁴

Volume XVI of *The Atlantic* (July to December, 1865) has the following contributors of poetry, most of them New Englanders by birth or long residence and association: Aldrich (2), Trowbridge, Whittier (2), Holmes (2), George H. Boker, C. C. Coxe, H. H. Brownell, Longfellow, Lowell, Bryant, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, T. W. Parsons, Lucy Larcom, Bayard Taylor, Celia Thaxter, Mrs. E. A. C. Akers. The roll for the next six months varies little. In the 1870's, Bret Harte is the striking exception to the tendency to adhere to New England talent.⁷⁵

⁷² Eloise Ruth Shaw, *Longfellow and His Relations to Contemporary Periodicals*, University of Chicago Thesis, 1922.

⁷³ Greenslet, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁷⁴ *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*, p. 114.

⁷⁵ Joaquin Miller had one poem in *The Atlantic* in the 1870's: "The Ship in the Desert," XXXIV, 48-50 (July, 1874).

An examination of critical material in the magazine is suggestive of the prevailing taste, a taste which could hardly embrace Whitman. In 1866 there was a two-column review of *Snow-Bound* but no review of *Drum-Taps*. In 1867 there were four and a half columns in review of J. G. Holland's *Kathrina* and in 1869 there was a two-column review of Stedman's *Blameless Prince*; but there was no review of the 1867 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Poets whose work was reviewed in *The Atlantic* in the 1870's included Bret Harte, Whittier, Longfellow, J. J. Piatt, Hayne, Bryant, Bayard Taylor, Timrod, Stedman, Joaquin Miller, John Boyle O'Reilly, Aldrich, Lowell, Mrs. S. M. B. Piatt, Trowbridge, Louise Chandler Moulton, Edgar Fawcett, Celia Thaxter, Gilder, and Lathrop. Of these names, those of Bryant, Gilder, Stedman, Fawcett, and Taylor are associated with New York; those of Hayne and Timrod with the South; those of Piatt, Harte, and Miller with the West. The rest are of New England.

Whitman's publications in the 1870's were: *After All Not to Create Only* (1871),^{75a} *Passage to India* (1871), *Democratic Vistas* (1871), *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free* (1872), *Memoranda During the War* (1875), *Two Rivulets* (1876), and two editions of *Leaves of Grass* (1871-1872 and 1876). John Burroughs's *Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person* appeared in a second edition in 1871 and might conceivably have excited comment. The first four were very slim books, hardly more than pamphlets. The editions were all small, and being privately printed, lacked the advertising of a publishing house. It is not certain that the editors of *The Atlantic* received them all. It may be assumed that George Parsons Lathrop was well informed in literary matters, and yet in 1877 he had only the Rossetti edition of *Leaves of Grass* and did not know where to buy an American edition.⁷⁶

As late as the middle eighties, indeed, Hamlin Garland, just arrived in Boston, considered that he was a pioneer in a taste for Whitman. Within a short time he was lecturing on Whitman to his class of young ladies in Waltham, and on November 15, 1888, he wrote a review of *November Boughs* for the *Boston Transcript*,

^{75a} There was a notice of this a half dozen lines in length in *The Atlantic* for Jan., 1872.

⁷⁶ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 17.

a review that by its conciliatory attitude shows that the writer did not consider the atmosphere very cordial to Whitman. Not so long before, a local clergyman had succeeded in bringing about the relinquishment of *Leaves of Grass* by Osgood.⁷⁷ The city had refused to receive Sidney Morse's bust of Whitman.⁷⁸ The poet's admirers were over-enthusiastic or timid. *The Atlantic*, consistently with its avowed aim as a conserving and ethical force in literature, steered a steady course, veering only slightly and very cautiously toward Whitman as the years passed.

⁷⁷ See Kennedy, *Whitman*, pp. 118-119. Kennedy maintains that the Reverend Baylies Allen, assistant pastor of Trinity Church, was the moving spirit in the proceedings.

⁷⁸ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 284.

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By
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I

IT IS safe to say that in no other city in this country, and in no other city in the world, with the possible exception of London, was sorrow at the death of Walt Whitman felt so deeply as in New York," wrote the New York correspondent to *The Literary World* (Boston) in April, 1892.¹ This statement is a reminder not only that Whitman had spent forty years of his life near the city, but also that even during the twenty years of his residence in Camden he had been in New York occasionally, and had maintained cordial relations with a number of literary men there, even if "the New York crowd," as he called the literati, did not consider him worthy of membership in their Authors' Club.²

"The New York crowd," if one considers the whole period of Whitman's life, was a varying quantity. At no time, indeed, was there entire unity. In the late 1850's Whitman was identified with the Bohemians of Pfaff's and of Henry Clapp's *Saturday Press*; but at the same time Bayard Taylor, Edmund Clarence Stedman, and Richard Henry Stoddard were the nucleus of a quite distinct literary group.³ There are a few names associated with each of the periodicals; and there are the newspaper men: Whitelaw Reid of the *Tribune* (with which George Ripley, Bayard Taylor, and William Winter were also at various times associated), Charles A. Dana of the *Sun*, and Julius Chambers of the *Herald*. Some of the men—Henry Mills Alden, William Dean Howells, and Charles Dudley Warner of *Harper's* and Edwin Lawrence Godkin of *The Nation*, for instance—were more closely identified with New England than with New York.

¹ XXIII, 126.

² The question of whether Whitman was refused membership in the Club is presented in detail by Clara Barrus in *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades* (Boston and New York, 1931), pp. 235-239.

³ See William Winter, *Old Friends* (New York, 1914), p. 293.

Whitman's relations with New York magazines, disregarding everything prior to 1855, began with his connection with the *Saturday Press*. The circulation of this weekly was probably not large. The editors were always hard-pressed for money, and the paper was finally discontinued for lack of funds.⁴ But its literary importance has been attested by Howells, who had himself written for the paper before his first visit to New York in August, 1860:

The young writers throughout the country were ambitious to be seen in it, and they gave their best to it; they gave literally, for the *Saturday Press* never paid in anything but hopes of paying, vaguer even than promises. It is not too much to say that it was very nearly as well for one to be accepted by the *Press* as to be accepted by the *Atlantic*, and for the time there was no other literary comparison.⁵

Howells is also emphatic about the importance to Whitman's reputation of Clapp's championship:

The chief of these [the men befriended by Clapp] was Walt Whitman, who, when the *Saturday Press* took it up, had as hopeless a cause with the critics on either side of the ocean as any man could have. It was not till long afterwards that his English admirers began to discover him, and to make his countrymen some noisy reproaches for ignoring him; they were wholly in the dark concerning him when the *Saturday Press*, which first stood his friend, and the young men whom the *Press* gathered about it, made him their cult.⁶

The material by and on Whitman which appeared in the *Press* from December 24, 1859, when "A Child's Reminiscence" ("Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking") was published there, until November 24, 1860, shows not only that the paper was open to Whitman, but that it tried definitely to promote his fame.⁷ John Burroughs and no doubt many other young men made their first acquaintance with him through these pages. Nor were there lacking other periodicals in which there was a possibility that he would find hospitality. In a letter to Whitman on May 14, 1860, Henry Clapp advised him to send copies of the Boston edition of *Leaves of Grass* to

⁴ Ferris Greenslet, *The Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich* (Boston and New York, 1908), p. 48.

⁵ *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (New York, 1900), p. 70.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

⁷ See Thomas O. Mabbott and Rollo G. Silver, *A Child's Reminiscence by Walt Whitman* (University of Washington, 1930).

Vanity Fair, *Momus*, *The Albion* (of which William Winter was editor), *The Day Book*, *The Journal of Commerce*, and *The Crayon*.⁸ The notice which in due time appeared in *The Crayon* was, to be sure, scornful;⁹ but at any rate he was not disregarded. *Vanity Fair* made no fewer than eleven references to Whitman from 1860 to 1862.

Nor did Whitman's recognition in periodicals die with these short-lived publications. During the next three decades he had important relations with three literary magazines second in rank only to *The Atlantic*: *The Galaxy*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, and *Scribner's Monthly* (later *The Century Magazine*); and with four prominent weeklies: *The Round Table*, *The Nation*, *The Independent*, and *The Critic*. *The Galaxy* treated Whitman very generously, both as a contributor and as a subject for criticism, from 1866 to 1871; and from 1865 to 1870 *The Round Table* and *The Nation*, though chary of praise and often very biting in comment, did not stint attention. In the seventies and eighties *Harper's* was somewhat receptive; and from 1876 *The Nation* and *The Independent* both gave generous space to Whitman criticism, though the criticism was almost all adverse. From 1880 to the time of his death Whitman was well received by *Scribner's* (*The Century*), and in the same period was definitely promoted by *The Critic*. The picture is not one of neglect (except, possibly, from about 1871 to 1875), or of persecution either, though many stupid and prejudiced comments were made, and probably some malicious ones.

II

The Galaxy, started in 1866 by William C. and Francis P. Church and absorbed by *The Atlantic* in 1878, gave at first some signs of a temper favorable to Whitman's utterances. One of the principal early contributors was Eugene Benson, whose articles made a plea for a robust, independent American literature. In the first of these, "About the Literary Spirit," he complained:

. . . we have not men of letters with the literary spirit that dare make literature the expression of an abundant and varied life. If they have reacted against formality and hypocrisy, like Walt Whitman, like him,

⁸ Horace L. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (New York, 1908), II, 375.

⁹ VII, 211 (July, 1860).

also, they are devoid of the literary spirit; if they have the literary spirit they strike their roots too deep into the past, like Hawthorne, and they leave untouched the social facts about them.¹⁰

But in "Literature and the People," published the next year,¹¹ Benson was more inclined to find virtue in Whitman, partly, no doubt, because Burroughs's long article, "Walt Whitman and His Drum-Taps," had appeared in *The Galaxy* meantime.¹² Writing of great men who had brought "literary emancipation and a national expression" to their countries, he said:

We can honor Emerson; we can honor Parke Godwin; we can honor Henry Ward Beecher; we can honor Walt Whitman. Emerson in ethics; Godwin in journalism, and as a publicist of rare ability; Beecher in the pulpit; Whitman in poetry, yes, in poetry—have corrected us, moved us, liberated us.¹³

The same note was sounded by John Burroughs in April, 1868, in an article called "Before Genius."¹⁴ Later Benson was writing in "Democratic Deities"—with reference, doubtless, to Whitman's social essays, "Democracy" and "Personalism," which had appeared in *The Galaxy* in December, 1867, and May, 1868—that Whitman was too much inclined to exalt the average.¹⁵ After this there was no very significant reference to him until 1871, when, in an account of "An Evening With Swinburne," "Lucy Fountain" devoted a column and a half to Swinburne's praise of Whitman.¹⁶ The year 1871, too, saw the last appearance of Whitman as a contributor, with his "O Star of France!"¹⁷ There was no important mention of him in the years 1872, 1873, 1874, and 1875. In February, 1876, Burroughs gave him a few lines (as he did in many of his essays) in "A Word or Two on Emerson"; in January, 1877, Joaquin Miller published his poem "To Walt Whitman," with its plain reference to the recent controversy, started in England, over American neglect of the poet:

¹⁰ *The Galaxy*, I, 491 (July 15, 1866).

¹¹ III, 871-876 (April 15, 1867).

¹² II, 606-615 (Dec. 1, 1866).

¹³ III, 875.

¹⁷ XI, 817 (June, 1871). The magazine had published three poems previously: "Carol of Harvest for 1867" (Sept., 1867), "Brother of All, with Generous Hand" (Jan., 1870), and "A Warble for Lilac-Time" (May, 1870).

¹⁴ V, 421-426.

¹⁵ VI, 661-665 (Nov., 1868).

¹⁶ XII, 230-234 (Aug., 1871).

O titan soul, ascend your starry steep
 On golden stair to gods and storied men!
 Ascend! nor care where thy traducers creep.¹⁸

A review of *Birds and Poets* in July, 1877, speaks of Burroughs's "characteristic rhapsody on Whitman" in that volume.¹⁹ So far as *The Galaxy* was concerned, Whitman had by this time become a figure of little consequence.

The career of Whitman in *The Galaxy* was plainly promoted by Burroughs, who was a fairly frequent contributor to the magazine throughout its existence, and was perhaps made possible by an increased interest in him after the publication of O'Connor's *The Good Gray Poet* (1866). In a letter to Myron Benton of August 26, 1866, Burroughs wrote: "I am going to see what can be done with the *Galaxy*, though I have little hope of getting an article in it favorable to Walt."²⁰ But such an article appeared in December and no doubt paved the way for the acceptance of Whitman's poems and prose articles. An important reference to the latter is found in a letter from Whitman to W. C. and F. P. Church of April 30, 1868. It proposes a third article, for the July issue, to be called "Orbic Literature."²¹ In recording the conversation about this letter, Horace Traubel reports himself as saying, "You found these three things responded to?"²² Whitman did not correct him, apparently, but as a matter of fact "Orbic Literature" did not appear. Perhaps the ironical comment in *The Nation*²³ and the denunciation in *The Round Table*,²⁴ elicited by the two articles ("Democracy" and "Personalism"), discouraged the editors. There is nothing in *The Galaxy* the following year (1869) by Whitman, and no comment on him. As time went on, the magazine perhaps settled more surely into a reputable position, and though it had been willing to admit the rebellious, or even the bizarre, at first, it was eventually not easily to be distinguished from the other literary magazines, and not to be more easily approached. Edmund Clarence Stedman and

¹⁸ XXIII, 29.

¹⁹ XXIV, 139.

²⁰ Clara Barrus, *The Life and Letters of John Burroughs* (Boston and New York, 1925), I, 120.

²¹ *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (New York, 1914), III, 454.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ VI, 7-8 (Jan. 2, 1868).

²⁴ See letters from "Wayne," VI, 413-414 (Dec. 21, 1867) and VII, 22-23 (Jan. 11, 1868), and editorial comment in VII, 268 (April 25, 1868) and VII, 316 (May 16, 1868).

Bayard Taylor were interested in it, and the latter sold to it some of Lanier's poems. Richard Grant White was a frequent contributor, and wrote many of the reviews, and his attitude toward Whitman was probably one of indifference or contempt.²⁵

III

Whitman was reported by Traubel as saying in 1888, in regard to a statement in *Current Literature* that all the magazines fought shy of W. W. except *Harper's*, "That exception seems very funny. *Harper's* is the great shy. I have no doubt there is a standing order in the office: Don't touch Walt Whitman: leave him alone."²⁶ Earlier in the same year he had said that five or six poems in succession had been rejected "years ago."²⁷ The letters of rejection of manuscripts sent to *Harper's* which he gave to Traubel, however, were only four in number, and bore dates of January 3, May 12, and June 8, 1885, and September 20, 1886.²⁸ Henry M. Alden, editor of *Harper's*, was probably sincere in saying of "Fancies at the Navesink" that he did not think they would make "a favorable impression upon our readers—though they might upon a select few."²⁹ At any rate, *Harper's* had tried Whitman, in March, 1884, with "With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea!" and in January, 1885, with "Of That Blithe Throat of Thine"; and years before (February and March, 1874) had published "The Song of the Redwood-Tree" and the "Prayer of Columbus," and in April, 1881, "Patrolling Barnegat." These five poems constitute Whitman's contributions to *Harper's*, except for "Death's Valley," which appeared in the April issue, 1892.

The critical references to Whitman in *Harper's* are to be found chiefly in the departments of the "Easy Chair" and of the "Editor's Study," which were conducted by George William Curtis, Henry Mills Alden, William Dean Howells, and Charles Dudley Warner. The personal attitudes of a few men, therefore, are important.

²⁵ See his review of Swinburne's *Blake* in *The Galaxy*, V, 792 (June, 1868).

²⁶ *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (Boston, 1906), I, 462.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 185.

²⁸ The last was a rejection of the prose War Memoranda, because "The Century Magazine has so strongly occupied this field that we do not wish to enter upon it" (*ibid.*, II, 226). The other letters are as follows: rejection of "After the Supper and Talk" (*ibid.*, II, 211); rejection of "Voice of the Rain" (*ibid.*, I, 28); rejection of "Fancies at the Navesink" (*ibid.*, I, 61).

²⁹ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 61.

George William Curtis was not an enthusiastic admirer of Whitman's work. He wrote to William Douglas O'Connor on October 3, 1867:

Well, I read your poet and his praises, and I mention him in places where his name was never heard, and I argue and assert, and defy, and declaim—and if I do not wholly convert myself, I do at least open some generous minds to consider. I watch the fight in England with curious interest.³⁰

The editor of the "Easy Chair" had already proved himself interested and kindly by his comments in September, 1860, on Whitman's poem on the visit of the Japanese princes, which he quoted freely and commended for the "fine and striking things" that were said, even though "the essential melody of song" was lacking,³¹ and by the notice of *Drum-Taps* in December, 1865, in which he gracefully refused to "argue the matter" or "express any opinion," but quoted "O Captain! My Captain!" and "Beat, Beat, Drums!"³² His later references include mention of the "good gray poet" in a list of "younger names" in literature in November, 1871, and a polite but firm protest in June, 1876, against the accusation of American neglect of Whitman which had been made by Robert Buchanan and other English admirers. It is not surprising, after all, that Curtis, being so enthusiastic about the last of Tennyson's *Idylls*, which he thought struck "the highest and sweetest note in modern literature,"³³ and about the "tearfully pathetic" qualities of Jean Ingelow's poetry,³⁴ should have been no more enthusiastic about a barbaric yawp; or that, desiring that Americans should develop good manners and accepting emphatically the criterion of popular approval, he should have been dubious about Whitman's merits.

The "Editor's Literary Record" is even less favorable. Its opinions may be attributed to Henry Mills Alden, a New Englander by birth and predilection. The only comment in this column on the Osgood edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1881) is that it is "a congeries of bizarre rhapsodies, that are neither sane verse nor intelligible prose."³⁵ In a review of Sidney Lanier's *The English Novel* in

³⁰ Quoted by Bliss Perry in *Walt Whitman* (Boston and New York, 1906), p. 158.

³¹ *Harper's*, XXI, 555.

³² XXXII, 123-124.

³³ XXIII, 705 (Oct., 1861).

³⁴ XXVIII, 276 (Jan., 1864).

³⁵ LXIV, 313 (Jan., 1882).

October, 1883, there is a reference to the fact that the book refutes Walt Whitman's and Zola's theories of art,³⁶ an indication that the poet's name had come to be associated for better or worse with the new realism. The "Editor's Study" in 1888, 1889, and 1891, conducted at this time by William Dean Howells, is rather more favorable. There is an appreciative view of *November Boughs* in February, 1889,³⁷ but the best that can be admitted in November, 1891, is "that he is now and again on the way to the way we should all like to find; but we know his way is not the way."³⁸ In these later years the most favorable comment that Whitman received in *Harper's* was by George Parsons Lathrop in an article called "The Literary Movement in New York." Lathrop said in part:

But of all the people with poetic voices who have lived on this populous island, Walt Whitman alone has attempted to reproduce its elements in a shape suggesting their mass and variety, and with a spirit responding to and interpreting them. . . . The largeness of his grasp, and his purely native tone, will always serve to remind us of the radical course and the independent steps that must be taken before this part of the world can have an adequate portrayal in poetry.³⁹

After Whitman's death there was no attempt at eulogy or criticism. The Alexander portrait is a frontispiece for the April issue, 1892, and Whitman's own poem, "Death's Valley," is printed.

The attitude of *Harper's* is important in a study of Whitman's reputation. The magazine did not have, especially at first, the irreproachable literary connections and standing that *The Atlantic* enjoyed. In the early years the pages were filled with English material, and it was not until the middle seventies that the magazine took advantage of even so popular an American writer as Longfellow. Its importance lay in its wide circulation. As early as 1852 it was said to have 135,000 subscribers, whereas *The Atlantic* claimed only 30,000 in 1859. Whitman fared better as a contributor in *Harper's* than in *The Atlantic*, but slightly better in quantity of criticism in *The Atlantic*.⁴⁰ Critical omissions in *Harper's* do not seem sig-

³⁶ LXVII, 798.

³⁸ LXXXIII, 962.

³⁷ LXXXVIII, 488-489.

³⁹ LXXXIII, 823-824 (Nov., 1886).

⁴⁰ The comparative amount of attention given to Whitman in *The Atlantic* and *Harper's* (1855-1892) is indicated in the following summary: *Atlantic*—2 poems, 1 long review, 4 short reviews, 5 extensive references, 6 incidental references; *Harper's*—6 poems, 2 reviews, 5 fairly extensive references, 7 incidental references.

nificant, however, since the tone of the magazine was less literary than that of *The Atlantic* and there were far fewer reviews and critical articles. The only definitely hostile comment in *Harper's* is that on the 1881 edition. Very apparently, however, Whitman was by no means "accepted" by this publication.

IV

Scribner's Monthly, which entered⁴¹ the field much later than *Harper's*, was on the whole more favorable than the latter to the development of Whitman's fame. While maintaining a good literary standard, chiefly, perhaps, because of the taste and judgment of Richard Watson Gilder, associate editor from 1870 to 1881, and editor from 1881 to 1909, it was fairly receptive to young and little known writers. The policy of the magazine is indicated by the fact that when in 1879 a St. Louis paper published an interview with Whitman in which he was quoted as speaking of the neglect of younger writers by the magazines, Robert Underwood Johnson, of the *Scribner's Monthly* staff, wrote asking him to name these neglected writers so that he might solicit contributions.⁴²

More than most magazines, *Scribner's Monthly* reflected in the seventies the personal views of the editor, Josiah Gilbert Holland, for he wrote "Topics of the Time" for the first eleven years of the magazine's existence. The New York *Evening Post* stated at his death that no literary man in America was so accurately fitted for the precise work of developing a great popular magazine, for "He had the immense advantage of keeping on a plane of thought just above that of a vast multitude of readers, each one of whom he could touch with his hand and raise a little upward."⁴³ That Holland did not consider Whitman uplifting is evident from comments both in the magazine itself⁴⁴ and in his correspondence. Johnson states that Dr. Holland's opposition to Whitman, of which Johnson, like every one else, was aware, did not keep him from accepting one or two of his poems for the magazine;⁴⁵ but if poems were accepted they were not printed. The first contribution from Whitman to appear

⁴¹ 1870. In Nov., 1881, it became *The Century Magazine*.

⁴² Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays* (Boston, 1923), p. 335.

⁴³ Algernon de Vivier Tassin, *The Magazine in America* (New York, 1916), p. 290.

⁴⁴ See "Topics of the Time" for May, 1876; Oct., 1878; and Oct., 1881.

⁴⁵ Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

in *Scribner's Monthly* (then *The Century*) was in February, 1887, when Gilder was editor. Whitman himself told of having been advised by John Swinton to offer a poem to *Scribner's Monthly*, and of having been rejected "with a note of the most offensive character," which he destroyed.⁴⁶ It was only by persuading Holland that his paper would be judicial and that no review of American poets could ignore a man who had made himself so much talked of at home and abroad that Edmund Clarence Stedman was able to get his permission to include Whitman in the series of articles on American poets that he was doing for *Scribner's Monthly* in 1880.⁴⁷ In regard to Stedman's proposed paper, Holland wrote to Gilder:

I have read Stedman's paper. His treatment of Whitman's indecency is excellent, and the old wretch can no longer defend it. Without any plea for morality and purely on artistic grounds, he demolishes all the old man's defenses and leaves him without any apology for adhering to his early smut. I shall find no fault with the rest. That is, I do not criticize it, though I cannot help feeling that Whitman does not in any measure deserve the great attention we are giving him. He has not enriched American literature with any such congruous material as will enter into it and become a portion of the common stock appropriated by the public taste or the public need. You might strike out of existence all he has written, and the world would not be consciously poorer. . . . His art is a monster or a bastard, and will have no progeny. I am only troubled—in regard to this paper—by the thought that we are helping to bolster a reputation that has no legitimate basis on which to stand. A good brain with all its energies wasted on a style so irredeemably vicious that no man can ever imitate it without disgrace—that is Walt Whitman to me.⁴⁸

Holland had reason to be disturbed about the possible effect of the paper, for it was widely commented upon when it appeared in November, 1880.⁴⁹ In spite of its reservations, it was the strongest indorsement of Whitman that had appeared in an American magazine. Stedman's nervousness about the undertaking and anxiety to justify himself to his friends are a revelation of the status of Whitman at the time. Stedman wrote to Gilder on July 1, 1880, that he

⁴⁶ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 184.

⁴⁷ Laura Stedman and George M. Gould, *Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman* (New York, 1910), II, 106.

⁴⁸ Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-338. Sept. 19, 1880.

⁴⁹ *Scribner's Monthly*, XXI, 47-64.

was "skirmishing *in re* Whitman"; and after referring to recent suspected activities in *The Californian* of the "Junta," as he called William Douglas O'Connor and the rest of Whitman's too staunch admirers, he ended on the note of apology and resolution:

Never mind. I cannot leave out of my book a poet who is extolled by O'Connor, Emerson, Conway, Burroughs, Swinton, Rossetti, Swinburne, Buchanan, Dowden, Linton, Clive—but the line stretches out "to the crack of doom." I shall write *honestly* and appreciatively, but judiciously, and take whatever results with a clear conscience.⁵⁰

He wrote to George William Curtis on July 16: "I am *wrestling* with Whitman. Somehow, reading closely a writer of any parts, and no matter how he has irritated me, I always find an immense amount of good in him."⁵¹ And he addressed Richard Grant White on July 18 in a similar vein:

Now I have to write upon Whitman . . . Can't ignore him—too widely known here and abroad. Shall write the first *judicial* article, also, *in re* Whitman. Shall castigate him for affectation and humbug in his *life, manners*, style; but fully recognize his lyrical and descriptive genius. You are not aware that he has, in the course of years, become an *artist* in his irregular verse. Just glance at his "Captain! O my Captain!" [*sic*] and at "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," and you will find something to astonish you. The latter long lyric is a wonderful affair, *me judice*.⁵²

A letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich on November 22, 1880, shows the same desire to conciliate hostile opinion toward Whitman and toward himself as a champion.⁵³ There is a clear view in such correspondence not so much of Stedman's own attitude as of that of prominent literary men and of the entire literary world.

That Whitman's friends attached great importance to Stedman's generally favorable treatment of him in his *Scribner's Monthly* article is shown by a comment of William Sloane Kennedy in a letter written to Whitman on January 20, 1881, shortly after the criticism appeared. "I heartily congratulate you, dear friend," he wrote, "that at last you are having justice done you (in some degree) by the literary class of this country."⁵⁴ Stedman's friendship with

⁵⁰ Stedman and Gould, *op. cit.*, II, 106-107.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, II, 107.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, II, 108.

⁵⁴ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 378.

other respected literary men was close, and his own reputation irreproachable. It is probably no mere coincidence that in 1881, only six months after the appearance of Stedman's article, Osgood and Company of Boston offered to become the publishers of *Leaves of Grass* on the usual terms.

Stedman's temerity persisted, in spite of misgivings, which probably grew less as the years passed. The *Scribner's Monthly* essay was of course included in his *Poets of America* (1885), in other parts of which there are a number of incidental references to Whitman. Stedman gave him thirteen pages in Volume VII of his *Library of American Literature* (1889). And in his lectures at Johns Hopkins University in 1891 on "The Nature and Elements of Poetry" (published in *The Century* in 1892 and in the same year in book form), he gave Whitman respectful attention and praise. His interest accounts for no fewer than seven references to Whitman in *Scribner's Monthly* (or *The Century*). These include his essays on "Poetry in America" (October, 1881), on "Emerson" (April, 1883), and on "The Twilight of the Poets" (September, 1885), as well as a review of the Stedman and Hutchinson anthology (June, 1889) by Henry A. Beers.⁵⁵

To the influence of Gilder may be attributed the acceptance of contributions by Whitman: "Father Taylor and Oratory" (February, 1887) and "Army Hospitals and Cases" (October, 1888); and the poems, "Twilight," "Old Age's Lambent Peaks," "My 71st Year," "Old Age's Ship and Crafty Death's" (printed respectively in December, 1887; October, 1888; November, 1889; and February, 1890). Whitman himself judged Gilder's attitude thus: "Gilder is much the same as Stedman: is friendly, listens to me, admits my measure—yet looks with distrust on all the claims of my friends, especially at the fund from abroad, of which he said once to Talcott Williams or Tom Donaldson: 'That galls me—I can't get over it.'"⁵⁶ There is no doubt that Gilder regarded Whitman with some personal disapproval.⁵⁷ But he gave Whitman a rare sort of praise in commending the form of his work on an important public occasion—the

⁵⁵ XXXVIII, 317.

⁵⁶ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I, 170.

⁵⁷ See *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder*, ed. Rosamond Gilder (Boston, 1916), pp.

birthday dinner given for Whitman in Camden in May, 1889; and he confirmed this opinion in 1906.⁵⁸

Another personal association which appears in the pages of *Scribner's Monthly* is the friendship of Burroughs, which made itself felt in every magazine to which he had access. An early comment on Whitman in *Scribner's Monthly* occurs in Burroughs's essay, "The Birds of the Poets," in September, 1873; and again in his "Nature and the Poets," in December, 1879, Whitman receives appreciative comment. Reviews of Burroughs's *Winter Sunshine* and *Birds and Poets*, both of which contained Whitman essays, and an article on Burroughs in January, 1877, all give sympathetic discussion of Whitman.⁵⁹ Of course, not only the influence of Burroughs but of the reviewer is at work here, for the books in which Burroughs discussed Whitman were often reviewed without reference to what was probably regarded as an eccentric admiration for the poet, and often the comment was slighting.

Whitman was not always fortunate in his friendships. It might be argued that the championship of O'Connor did him at times more harm than good. With some persons Swinburne's or Oscar Wilde's admiration, real or supposed, must have been a grave handicap. But Burroughs and Stedman were thoroughly respected. So was Gilder. And so, ironically enough, *Scribner's* did promote the reputation of the man whose work Holland had deplored. One may assume that into 125,000 homes at least there went a picture of Whitman which was not that of a monster. But on his death there was no eulogistic or critical article. It must have been thought that Stedman twelve years before had spoken strongly enough and for all time.

V

The weekly or bi-weekly periodicals provide a different view of Whitman from that which is to be gained in the monthly magazines. There are some reviews of his work, but the material which is most revealing in a study of his reputation consists of personal items, letters from subscribers, and editorials which indicate whether at any certain time he was regarded as an important or a notorious figure in the literary world.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 403.

⁵⁹ XI, 750; XIV, 407-408; XIII, 336 ff.

The Round Table lasted but a short time (1863-1869), but it seems to have been one of the best weeklies of its day. It is significant for the present study that the periodical adopted an attitude of disapproval toward Clapp and his Bohemia, and that Clapp retaliated with slurs upon Stedman and Stoddard, who were associated with *The Round Table*.⁶⁰ The attention given Whitman by the periodical was considerable. In four years (1865-1868) there were at least twenty-six items on him, including two long reviews, one of *Drum-Taps* by William Dean Howells and one of *The Good Gray Poet* by R. H. Stoddard. Like *The Galaxy*, *The Round Table* was clamoring for an independent American literature and might therefore have been expected to be somewhat favorable to Whitman, but such was not the case. On November 4, 1865, the paper announced:

Mr. Walter Whitman, better known as Walt Whitman, the author of that singular production, "Leaves of Grass," will soon bring out a second and much smaller work, "Drum Taps," written in the same uncouth and lumbering but strikingly idiomatic style.⁶¹

The next week William Dean Howells in his review of the book passed the verdict that Whitman's lawlessness was not the form which the unconscious poetry of American life would take, since even the rudest people had sought artistic expression and his method was "unspeakably inartistic." With fine patriotism, Howells continued:

Is it not more probable that, if the passion principle of American life could find utterance, it would choose the highest, least dubious, most articulate speech? Could the finest, most shapely expression be too good for it?⁶²

Later in his review Howells remarked:

There were reasons in the preponderant beastliness of that book why a decent public should reject it; but now the poet has cleansed the old channels of their filth, and pours through them a stream of blameless purity, and the public has again to decide, and this time more directly, on the question of his poethood.

⁶⁰ Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders* (New York, 1933), p. 46.

⁶¹ *N. S.*, I, 135.

⁶² *N. S.*, I, 147 (Nov. 11, 1865).

The moral issue was on the verge of a resurrection, however, an event which was given ample advertisement by O'Connor's pamphlet, *The Good Gray Poet*, reviewed by Stoddard in *The Round Table* on January 20, 1866.⁶³ The ridicule in this article was directed at O'Connor rather than at Whitman, but Stoddard left no doubt of his objection to the "rank odor" of the *Leaves*. This review was the beginning of a sharp controversy in which Charles Lanman and O'Connor, who delighted in battles of words, were involved.⁶⁴

An even sharper controversy ran through three issues of *The Round Table* the next year. A slight reference to Whitman's "To a Common Prostitute" by "C" was objected to at length by O'Connor, who was answered in turn, ironically, by "C."⁶⁵ In such bickerings one sees that Whitman suffered from his friends. They kept him in the limelight, but may well have increased, rather than diminished, the feeling against him. At the end of the year, a more dignified discussion occurred as a result of Whitman's article in *The Galaxy* on "Democracy." This began with an editorial headed "Walt Whitman's Utopia," in which there was skeptical, but not unsympathetic or contemptuous, discussion of the essay as a reply to Carlyle's "Shooting Niagara." There were some facetious remarks about the "antagonizing rhapsodists," of whom "Mr. Whitman is by all odds the more incomprehensible."⁶⁶ But vigorous denunciation of Whitman's political and social creed, as expressed in these *Galaxy* essays—as well as of the naturalism of his verse and the bigotry of his attitude toward other writers—came in two letters by "Wayne" on December 21, 1867, and January 11, 1868. The correspondent condemned Whitman's democracy as "extravagant and sentimental," nothing but "gabble and platitudes."⁶⁷ Such writing insured attention for the *Galaxy* article on "Personalism," which appeared in April and elicited this comment from *The Round Table*:

The paper which will probably attract most notice is the second of Walt Whitman's remarkable yawps, entitled this time *Personalism*, and apparently a sequel to his former article about democracy, which it surpasses, if possible, in incoherency and bombastic unreason.⁶⁸

⁶³ III, 37.

⁶⁴ III, 61 (Jan. 27, 1866); III, 76 (Feb. 3, 1866).

⁶⁵ V, 41 (Jan. 19, 1867); V, 104 (Feb. 16, 1867); V, 121 (Feb. 23, 1867).

⁶⁶ VI, 370 (Dec. 7, 1867).

⁶⁷ VII, 23 (Jan. 11, 1868).

⁶⁸ VII, 268 (April 25, 1868).

To some extent the attitude of *The Round Table* toward Whitman was conditioned by the development of his reputation in England from 1866 to 1869. The English enthusiasm which preceded and followed the publication of the Rossetti edition of *Leaves of Grass* was early reflected in this alert American periodical. In the "Correspondence from London" in the issue of March 17, 1866, M. D. C. (Moncure Daniel Conway) spoke of the wide extension of Whitman's fame. On May 25, 1867, *The Round Table* announced that Swinburne's forthcoming essay on Blake would contain a chapter in criticism of Whitman. On October 12 this essay, as well as a favorable comment on Whitman in *The Saturday Review* (London), was again referred to in *The Round Table* with the remark:

No man, the proverb says, is a prophet in his own country, and literary reputations seldom begin at home. Walt Whitman may yet dawn upon us from across the ocean in a blaze of literary splendor that may make a great many folk rub their eyes and wonder that they had been so long blind to so much excellence. And the praise is likely to be as excessive as the blame. Posterity will probably settle his true rank. Our poetry is yet in its infancy and Whitman is perhaps the Ennius who precedes our coming Virgil.⁶⁹

On November 2 *The Round Table* noted Robert Buchanan's eulogy of Whitman in *The Broadway Magazine* for November and remarked that "in common with almost every late English writer on Walt Whitman's poems, Mr. Buchanan praises them warmly for qualities which have hitherto, by the majority of American critics, been considered the reverse of commendable."⁷⁰ These comments show the attitude of mingled respect, surprise, and slight resentment with which Americans received the English vogue of Whitman in its first acute stage.

Some notice was necessarily taken of the English reviews of the Rossetti edition of *Leaves of Grass*. *The Round Table* on April 25, 1868, in commenting on an enthusiastic review of Whitman's work by John Camden Hotten in *The Academia*, an English educational journal, found it "somewhat odd" that a country whose literature was "the most fastidious in the world" had given "the most unconventional and unkempt of poets" his strongest indorsement. "Perhaps,"

⁶⁹ VI, 248.

⁷⁰ VI, 296.

the writer added, offering an explanation that was to be used again and again by American critics who could not be pleased with English judgments: "Perhaps it is a disgusting reaction from the very artificiality of their native poets that has forced from English critics the cry of delight over the lusty nature that Whitman sings and celebrates."⁷¹

The lack of American enthusiasm shown in these notices was accompanied by a vagueness about the author's work which is rather surprising in the light of so much comment. On October 27, 1866, it was announced that Whitman was "preparing something for the press, either a new poem or a new edition of his old poems, or perhaps both"; on December 15 of the same year it was announced that Burroughs was to have a book on Walt Whitman; on March 21, 1868, the statement was made that Whitman had nearly completed a final edition of his poems, in which "he [had] practically carried out a long-nourished design of depicting the religious element in the character and personality which is considered by him necessary to the completeness of his work"; and again on November 7, 1868, there was a similar statement, with the further notice that he had written *Democratic Vistas* and some papers for the London magazines.⁷² The first two announcements refer to the 1867 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, and to Burroughs's *Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person*, which were never reviewed in *The Round Table*, however; the others seem to refer to a project which was not completed until the publication of the 1871 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Indefinite notices of this sort, inspired, probably, by Whitman himself, were not usual among literary men, and were possible only because he was his own publisher and his own promoter, and not always a well-advised one. If Whitman did not resent misunderstanding or opposition, however, but only lack of attention, he had no cause to complain of *The Round Table*.

VI

In commenting on Whitman and his recent critics shortly after the poet's death, John Burroughs stated that *The Nation* had always been hostile to Whitman.⁷³ Examination of the magazine verifies

⁷¹ VII, 269.

⁷² IV, 212; IV, 327; VII, 187; VIII, 312.

⁷³ "Walt Whitman and His Recent Critics," *In Re Walt Whitman*, ed. Traubel, Bucke, and Harned (Philadelphia, 1893), pp. 93 ff.

this statement. From Henry James's scathing review of *Drum-Taps* on November 16, 1865, to Thomas Wentworth Higginson's article on April 7, 1892, in which he more than implied that Whitman's physical collapse had been due to dissipation, there is scarcely a favorable sentence about Whitman. Besides *Drum-Taps*, the Whitman books reviewed are *The Good Gray Poet*, the 1881 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Bucke's biography of Whitman, and *November Boughs*.⁷⁴ These reviews are vigorous and often intelligent, if severe; nor do they necessarily show a special grudge against Whitman, for *The Nation* was no respecter of literary persons and at various times was sharp in its strictures upon Sidney Lanier, Bayard Taylor, Bret Harte, and Joaquin Miller. Still, none of these received such attacks as did Whitman. In 1868 *The Nation* was able to be not too unpleasantly patronizing:

Although, as men and women have for some centuries agreed to talk to each other, orally and in print, Mr. Whitman is to be called indecent in speech; and although, as able men have for all these centuries been talking to us for the common benefit, one would say that he lacks a pinch or so of brains; and although it may be said that in his poems he as an artist leads a very intermittent life, and is generally non-existent, still there is this to be said of him, that he has so heartily and honestly, with such belief in it and such love for it, "sounded his barbaric yawp," as he happily phrases it, in behalf of the greatness of mere manhood and the consequent perfect equality of every man with every other, that he may very well be honored as a preacher of democracy—democracy in its wider, humanitarian sense—as it is perhaps to exist in "these States." For the poet of democracy we, for our own part, feel as if we should have to wait, and, thinking of what poetry is, we feel as if we should wait willingly. What Mr. Whitman wants when he speaks of an American literature we can easily understand, and to a certain extent we can join with him in the desire for its coming.⁷⁵

As late as 1876 a writer in *The Nation* could ignorantly or wilfully refer to *Leaves of Grass* as "Blades of Grass."⁷⁶ But after the Os-good edition there was no doubt about what Whitman stood for or what *The Nation* thought of it.

⁷⁴ II, 118-119 (Jan. 25, 1866); XXXIII, 476-477 (Dec. 15, 1881); XXXVII, 84 (July 26, 1883); XLVII, 502 (Dec. 20, 1888).

⁷⁵ VI, 8 (Jan. 2, 1868).

⁷⁶ XXII, 28 (Jan. 13, 1876).

That the attitude of *The Nation* was recognized as over-sharp is suggested by a letter from Mrs. Lanier, which appeared on August 30, 1883, under the heading "Sidney Lanier's Judgment of Walt Whitman." Mrs. Lanier explains that in the correction of proofs of her late husband's *The English Novel*, Dr. William Hand Browne, of Johns Hopkins, had deleted a passage which she thought, in justice to Whitman, should stand. The passage as quoted is:

But let me first carefully disclaim and condemn all that flippant and sneering tone which dominates so many discussions of Whitman. While I differ from him utterly as to every principle of artistic procedure; while he seems to me the most stupendously mistaken man in all history as to what constitutes true democracy and the true advance of art and man; while I am immeasurably shocked at the sweeping invasions of those reserves which depend on the very personality I have so much insisted upon, and which the whole consensus of the ages has considered more and more sacred with every year of growth in delicacy; yet, after all these prodigious allowances, I owe some keen delights to a certain combination of bigness and naïveté which make some of Whitman's passages so strong and taking: and indeed, on the one occasion when he has abandoned his theory of formlessness and written in form, he has made 'My Captain, O my Captain,' surely one of the most tender and beautiful poems in any language.⁷⁷

The first sentence of the quoted passage might so easily be applied to a review of Bucke's *Whitman* which had appeared in *The Nation* the week before that it seems plausible that this review had inspired Mrs. Lanier's letter. It began, "This is an unadulterated eulogy by a man of very little culture or critical ability; and there is not much in it that was not better said by Mr. Burroughs a dozen or more years ago"; referred to "a long and amusingly vehement letter by Mr. W. D. O'Connor that enlivens his otherwise dull pages immensely"; and continued with an unflattering account of Whitman's "idle and dissipated" early life and his *Leaves*.⁷⁸

The Nation took a high moral tone in its discussions of literature. There is righteous indignation in the comments on Swinburne, Wilde, and Zola, with each of whom, at one time or another, Whitman's name was linked.⁷⁹ In the review of Herbert Gilchrist's life

⁷⁷ XXXVII, 183 (Aug. 30, 1883).

⁷⁸ XXXVII, 84 (July 26, 1883).

⁷⁹ Mentioned in connection with Swinburne in XXVII, 45 (July 18, 1878); with Wilde in XXXIV, 28-29 (Jan. 12, 1882); with Zola in XXXVII, 55-56 (July 19, 1883).

of Anne Gilchrist, the writer tried to explain the lady's championship of Whitman by pointing out

that she had completed her husband's *Life of Blake* . . . years before, and had consequently long been familiar with erratic notions upon delicate subjects; and doubtless, too, the peculiar moral prepossessions of the aesthetic group to which she was so nearly allied in culture, counted in her judgment upon the tabooed portion of Walt Whitman's works.⁸⁰

The Nation was never tired of noting in Whitman the lack of ideal love. When, however, as in *November Boughs*, there was nothing morally objectionable, the reviewer resorted to a personal slur and reproached the poet for a lack of cheer in the face of death.⁸¹

Several *Nation* comments indicate that the irritability of the reviewers was aggravated by the activities of Whitman's disciples. In 1866 O'Connor's exaggerated praise in *The Good Gray Poet* was a subject for irony.⁸² The treatment of the principal character (Walt Whitman idealized and only very thinly disguised) in O'Connor's story "The Carpenter," published in *Putnam's Monthly* in 1867, was "disgusting" to *The Nation*.⁸³ Bucke's adulation fifteen years later was no less offensive. Conversely, there was praise for the "temperate" article by William Michael Rossetti in the *London Chronicle* in 1867⁸⁴ and for Stevenson's Whitman essay in 1878.

Because the time covered is longer, a chronological study of the magazine is more revealing than a study of *The Round Table*. In the sixties there were somewhat fewer notes than in *The Round Table* for the same period—a fact which shows, perhaps, a tendency to regard Whitman more strictly as a literary figure, not merely as good copy. During 1872, 1873, 1874, and 1875 there was little comment on Whitman, but the year 1876 started (January 13) with a commendation of Peter Bayne's sensational article on Whitman, and comments were thereafter fairly regular to the end of his life. All in all, the influence upon the public attitude toward Whitman must have been considerable, for Godkin's *Nation* was respected and had the reputation of being a liberal and fearless paper.

⁸⁰ XLIV, 476 (June 2, 1887).

⁸¹ XLVII, 502 (Dec. 20, 1888).

⁸³ V, 472 (Dec. 12, 1867).

⁸² II, 118-119 (Jan. 25, 1866).

⁸⁴ V, 64 (July 25, 1867).

VII

The circulation of *The Independent* was larger than that of *The Nation*, and its influence was therefore wider. Its moral tone could be no less impeccable, since it was definitely a religious paper. There seems to be less venom in the comments on Whitman, though the drift, particularly in the later years, is toward complete rejection. *The Independent* complained on March 30, 1876, "Walt Whitman's friends contrive to keep his name in the papers constantly."⁸⁵ But there is in the weekly itself a very large number of comments in 1876. In an editorial on May 4 headed "Pauper Poets," *The Independent* declared that Whitman "had shown a remarkable faculty, for a poet, of making himself perfectly comfortable," and that there was no reason why he, more than another, should be exempt from economic responsibilities.⁸⁶ On June 29 Charles F. Richardson attempted to evaluate Whitman's poetry, without consideration of his hospital work, generosity, poverty, uncouth attire, or other irrelevant matters that were apt to complicate discussion.⁸⁷ Though he found much to condemn he acknowledged some artistry in the work.

But here, as in so many other places, the Osgood edition roused moral indignation afresh. The *Independent* review on December 29, 1881, commented upon the aesthetic features of *Leaves of Grass*, its sources, its rhythm, its diction, but put most emphasis upon its "nudity," and ended: "Shame on the publisher who is sending them with his imprint to unsuspecting American homes."⁸⁸ The following week (January 12, 1882) an editorial, "Pudency in Literature," found "the root of the trouble" in "the realistic tendency in art and the materialistic tendency in philosophy," and mentioned in this connection Swinburne, Rossetti, Morris, and Wilde.⁸⁹ In a review of Stedman's *Poets of America* (November 19, 1885) there was again a reference to Whitman's connection with "the recently disputed merits of realism."⁹⁰ This association of Whitman with the realists, together with the fervor of disciples, conditioned the attitude of *The Independent* as it did that of *The Nation*. There was also the same pained or scornful surprise at English admiration. Writing

⁸⁵ XXVIII, 11.⁸⁷ XXVIII, 1.⁸⁹ XXXIV, 16.⁸⁶ XXVIII, 14.⁸⁸ XXXIII, 10.⁹⁰ XXXVII, 1488.

of "Poetical Fads" on September 6, 1888, a writer whom Whitman believed to be Stoddard⁹¹ stated:

It is curious the veneration in which this man's works are held in England, and the reflected glory they obtain in this country on that account. There may be something interesting and venerable in Whitman's personality as there is, undoubtedly, something pathetic in his poverty; but we have always failed to comprehend the interest in his poetry . . . that Lord Tennyson and others have frequently manifested.⁹²

After this there were several chances for *The Independent* to register its disapproval. A very short notice of *November Boughs* hinted at another matter which rankled, Whitman's real or supposed contempt for the recognized literati.⁹³ In the same year (February 16, 1888) *The Independent* had commented on Ernest Rhys's remarks on Whitman in his talk on "The New Poetry" at the Nineteenth Century Club:

We agree with him in thinking that a great poet must be a poet of the people and must have sympathies as broad, as free, and as simple as Nature. But we part company with him when he asserts that Walt Whitman has these qualifications pre-eminently, and that the spirit of "Leaves of Grass" is the spirit that is to animate the new poet. It was this essentially weak part of the paper that Mr. Rhys's opponents combated.⁹⁴

The short review of *Good-Bye my Fancy* damned with pity: "His latest book does not challenge criticism; it is evidently the work of a mind sorely diseased, worn out indeed. . . . So far as what purports to be literature is concerned here is the end of a wasted life."⁹⁵ The article which appeared at Whitman's death (probably by the same hand as the *Independent* review of the 1881 edition, since the points made are the same and whole sentences are repeated) declared: "He outlived his fame, and will never recover his reputation; because he had in him no music, no imagination, no delicacy of sentiment, and was but the voice of one bawling in the wilderness, with nothing to say to the listener."⁹⁶

Lanier, musical and chaste, had been *The Independent's* chosen

⁹¹ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, II, 274-275.

⁹² XL, 1131.

⁹³ XL, 1538 (Nov. 29, 1888).

⁹⁵ XLIII, 19 (Sept. 10, 1891).

⁹⁴ XL, 204.

⁹⁶ XLIV, 439 (March 31, 1892).

poet. To Whitman was accorded almost no praise and scant justice. Richardson's article in 1876 seemed an attempt at fair evaluation, but the unexpurgated *Leaves* in 1881 once more upset the apple cart, and the reviewers and editorial writers spent most of their energy in insinuating and reviling.

VIII

After a consideration of the attitude of harsh condemnation expressed by *The Nation* and *The Independent*, it is interesting to find that there was a weekly—a strictly literary review—which, in the eighties, not only accepted many contributions from Whitman but in its criticisms treated him with uniform respect and enthusiasm. The paper was *The Critic*, and it was edited by no less reputable persons than J. B. and J. L. Gilder, brother and sister of Richard Watson Gilder.

Whitman, grown querulous in his old age, remarked to Traubel in 1888, "I think *The Critic* is rather doubtful of me if not actually adverse—seems to delight to quote this squid and that making light of my work."⁹⁷ And at another time he said of the editors of *The Critic*, "Theirs is rather a hectic flush of admiration."⁹⁸ But it would seem to have been ungrateful to complain of a flush that inspired more than one hundred and sixty appearances of Whitman's name in the *Critic* pages in twelve years. Certainly no other writer received an equal amount of attention in this paper, and it is doubtful whether any American had ever received more attention in a single periodical in the same length of time. *The Critic* offers the best available evidence that Whitman did at last "arrive."

There are several indications that *The Critic* in its very first year set out to promote Whitman, or perhaps more accurately, to trade upon his name for the advertisement of a new publication. In the advertisements of the magazine in the second volume (1882), Whitman's name is second on the list of "actual contributors," which includes such persons as Stedman, Stoddard, Julia Ward Howe, Burroughs, R. W. Gilder, and Joel Chandler Harris. The leading article in the second number of the review (January 29, 1881) was the first of a series of papers by Whitman called "How I Get Around at Sixty and Take Notes." There were five more prose contributions

⁹⁷ *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, II, 112. ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 372.

in this year and six in the following year; and several of these were included in the volume *Essays from the Critic*, issued in May, 1882, and widely noticed and commended.

The time of the beginning of Whitman's career in *The Critic* is important. It was before Osgood had approached him on the subject of bringing out an edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Unless the Gilders had an altruistic interest in getting Whitman before the public or were actuated by personal regard for the poet—and these could hardly have been the only motives—he must have been recognized by this time, at least by literary people, as a figure of consequence. Such a status can be explained by the comment created in 1876 by the English subscription; or more directly, perhaps, by Stedman's paper on Whitman in *Scribner's* for November, 1880. It would seem that the Gilders realized, very possibly on Stedman's recommendation, that Whitman's value was bound to increase and were glad to take advantage of rising stock. At any rate, they lost no opportunity to introduce Whitman's name. They gave notice on August 13, 1881, of the forthcoming *Leaves of Grass*; they reviewed it with marked enthusiasm on November 5, with no more than a glance at the "grossnesses" of the book which bothered other reviewers.⁹⁹ They announced on December 3 a second edition of *Leaves of Grass*; in their notice of *Essays from the Critic* on May 20, 1882, they placed Whitman's name first among "the best-known names on the title-page"; on June 3 they registered their disapproval of the threat of suppression of *Leaves of Grass* in an editorial headed "The Massachusetts Dogberry," and in the same issue they quoted *The Philadelphia Press* and *The Springfield Republican* as champions of Whitman; on September 3 they quoted, in Whitman's favor, from "The Morally Objectionable in Literature," an essay by O. B. Frothingham in the October *North American Review*; on October 7 they commented on an incident in connection with Whitman's change of publishers.¹⁰⁰ They called attention several times to foreign regard for Whitman.

Nor did their paper show any great lapse of interest with the passing years. There were fewer comments in some years than in others, presumably because there were fewer things to comment on,

⁹⁹ I, 303.

¹⁰⁰ I, 339; II, 139; II, 152; II, 154; II, 256; II, 270.

but thirty items in 1887 and twenty-eight in 1892 are impressive. Every publication by or on Whitman until the time of his death (*Specimen Days and Collect*, Bucke's *Walt Whitman*, *November Boughs*, *Good-Bye my Fancy*, Gould's *Gems from Walt Whitman*) received extensive and favorable comment. The editors of *The Critic* admitted his lack of popularity, even, perhaps, took some satisfaction in it, as showing their own superior taste. In the review of Sidney Lanier's *The English Novel*, the writer commented, "Mr. Lanier speaks of Whitman's disciples, as if the evil of Whitman were spreading abroad; but as a matter of fact, who and where are these disciples?"¹⁰¹ This review, in which nearly an entire column of the column and a half is devoted to a controversion of Lanier's attitude toward Whitman (whereas the same book had been reviewed in *The Nation* and *The Independent* with no mention of Whitman) is only one of many examples of an evident desire to seize every chance to speak a word in his favor. William Sloane Kennedy, whose unqualified admiration of Whitman has since become better known than it was at that time, had a chance to get in a few words in "The Obsolescence of Barrel-Organ Poetry," and again in "The Precession of the Poets."¹⁰² Many instances might be cited of notices of foreign criticisms and translations, lectures, birthday celebrations, subscriptions, gifts, and personal matters. Some response from *Critic* readers is indicated in queries about Whitman in the "Free Parliament" column. It is notable that in the voting conducted by *The Critic* in 1884 for "forty immortals" for a hypothetical American Academy, Whitman was twentieth in the list, with seventy-six votes.

There is some indication, with the passing years, of a little more caution in criticism than had characterized the first notices, or of some weariness at the persistent agitation of disciples, particularly the English.¹⁰³ But the reviews of Whitman's last books were full of praise. That of *November Boughs* stands in marked contrast to the slighting review of the same work in *The Independent*. The reviewer for *The Critic* declared, "Sap at seventy is seldom so affluent as it is in this striking volume, binding up the life-long thoughts

¹⁰¹ III, 228 (May 19, 1883).

¹⁰² III, 239-240 (May 26, 1883); *N. S.*, VI, 109-110 (Sept. 4, 1886).

¹⁰³ *N. S.*, VI, 319 (Dec. 25, 1886).

of a revolutionist in verse, an evolutionist in belief; and it runs up and along these 'November Boughs' with a great urge and palpitation that expands and freights them to bursting."¹⁰⁴ The review of *Good-Bye my Fancy* maintains the note of approbation: "There is no sound of lamentation or Job-cry in it, pervaded as it is with bright, broad optimism, the grace of benignant utterance, the egoism of a healthy and gracious child."¹⁰⁵ The first issue of *The Critic* after the poet's death was a Whitman number (April 2, 1892), with several appreciations and criticisms, notably those by John Burroughs and Harriet Monroe; and throughout that year numerous comments and reprints of criticism, American and foreign, showed an unwavering interest and loyalty.

Among them, the Gilders of *The Century* and *The Critic* did much for Whitman. Perhaps they found ultimately that they had staked their critical reputation not only wisely but profitably.

IX

It seems clear from this examination of New York magazines that Whitman did not have such a great grievance against the periodicals as he liked to have others, especially his English friends, suppose. In the famous *West Jersey Press* letter of January 26, 1876, he wrote of himself:

Repeated attempts to secure a small income by writing for the magazines during his illness have been utter failures. The *Atlantic* will not touch him. His offerings to *Scribner* are returned with insulting notes; the *Galaxy* the same. *Harper's* did print a couple of his pieces two years ago, but imperative orders from headquarters have stopped anything further.¹⁰⁸

This letter was published, it is true, in the period of Whitman's greatest neglect, but the poet complained of mistreatment in much brighter days. In deciding whether he was justified in such complaints, it is well to remember that though his work was certainly rejected many times by magazine editors, his experience was not unique. He tended to overstress it—especially in the last decade of his life, when there was least cause for complaint—and probably to

¹⁰⁴ *N. S.*, XI, 25 (Jan. 19, 1889).

¹⁰⁵ *N. S.*, XVI, 114 (Sept. 5, 1891).

¹⁰⁶ "Walt Whitman's Actual American Position," reprinted by Clifton J. Furness in *Walt Whitman's Workshop* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), p. 246.

misinterpret motives for rejection. This he did, no doubt, in all sincerity, for he seems to have become abnormally sensitive to editorial slights. He wrote to William Sloane Kennedy on September 14, 1887: "I sent a little poem to *Harper's* (Alden)—but it came back, refused. This is the fourth refusal within a few months, and I shall try no more."¹⁰⁷

Whitman revealed a like sensitiveness to criticism as he grew older, and was not easily pleased with the amount or nature of discussion of his work which appeared in print. As far as the New York periodicals are concerned, it has been shown that there was little enough whole-hearted and enthusiastic commendation of him at any time, and that *The Nation* and *The Independent* were hostile and even venomous throughout his career. By the decade of the eighties, however, the amount of criticism had assumed rather generous proportions, and some of it—that in *The Critic* particularly—was very favorable.

One is even a little surprised, perhaps, to discover that Whitman received as much attention and as much approval from the magazines as he did. In the middle years of the nineteenth century literary critics were anxious that the United States should come to be recognized for its good manners and refinement, and Whitman, even after the years had tamed his barbaric yawp, shattered such hopes. The taint of immorality, shocking as it was, was hardly more distressing than a bizarre formlessness which threatened a destruction of standards whereby America was to rival England in the quality of its writing. England's unexpected approval of Whitman puzzled critics and only gradually modified their resentment. The poet himself at times intensified hostility by derogatory comments on his literary contemporaries. Suspicion of his vulgarity was increased by the over-zealous promotion of his cause by his disciples, and by his picturesque appearance and conduct, which many had no hesitation in calling a pose; and the puffs which he wrote for his own work were deemed inexcusable. The fact that his name came to be linked with those of Swinburne, Wilde, Zola, and other men whose moral principles were suspected strengthened the case against him.

Insofar as Whitman was carried along by the advancing wave of

¹⁰⁷ Kennedy, *Reminiscences of Walt Whitman* . . . (London, 1896), p. 56.

realism, however, his ultimate triumph was assured. The increasing strength of his literary position in the last decade of his life, revealed in this study of New York magazines, may be attributed, probably, in almost equal parts to the gains of realism and to the commendation of English critics. The influence of English opinion became evident in the 1860's, following the publication of Rossetti's edition of *Leaves of Grass*, was revived and grew rapidly in 1876, when the controversy about American neglect of Whitman raged on both sides of the Atlantic, and was steadily at work through the last decade of his life. After 1876 mention of the English attitude toward Whitman was a natural approach to a discussion of his poetry. It was the approach made by Stedman in the *Scribner's* article of November, 1880, which, it appears from this study, had a very positive effect on Whitman's fortunes in America.

The growth of Whitman's fame bewildered or exasperated some magazine critics, and most of them recognized it without quite countenancing it. Only the *Saturday Press* and *The Critic* among New York magazines showed consistently a hearty, confident approval.

